

As no request had been made by resolution of the Vestry to the Rector for his resignation—the desire being to have it appear a voluntary act—his manner was particularly offensive and uncalled for. Previous to this occasion, the meetings of the Vestry had always been conducted pleasantly; differences of opinion were discussed without acerbity, and the conclusions adopted were always acquiesced in cheerfully. The undersigned cannot recall to mind a single instance of protest or demand for change by the Rector. If “the Vestry has never fully represented the voice of the congregation,” it certainly is not the fault of the former, as the church-members were often urged to attend the elections at Easter, and no efforts were ever made by any of the Vestrymen to secure their own election. It has generally been a difficult matter to get a sufficient number of persons present to conduct the election.

As respects the congregation being kept in ignorance of the state of affairs, we can confidently assert that the fullest possible information has always been given by the Accounting Warden in his quarterly and annual reports to the Vestry—the latter being generally taken by the Rector for use in making his reports to the Convention of the Diocese. The Vestry had no opportunities of making statements to the congregation, but the Rector could have done so at any time if he saw fit. Any member of the congregation desiring information could readily have obtained it from the Rector, the Warden or the Secretary of the Vestry; the records of the two latter are as full and complete, as to all the affairs of the church, as they could possibly be made.

The Accounting Warden has no recollection of ever having been spoken to by the Rector in regard to increasing his pew-rent fifty per cent. The Warden, as is well known to many of the church-members, never hesitated to lend his aid on all proper occasions. The accusation that the article which appeared anonymously in an evening paper was written or prompted by the Accounting Warden, is emphatically denied by him, and we do not admire the spirit which prompts hasty, intemperate charges from the pulpit against this conscientious and faithful member of the Vestry, or this Vestry as a body.

As, until the recent Vestry meeting, our personal relations with the Rector have always been friendly, and no feeling of enmity existed on our part, our sole object being to promote the welfare of the parish, we cannot but express our surprise at the bitterness displayed by him in his recent addresses from the pulpit, and our regret that he has forced this issue.

EDWARD BROWN,
A. R. McILVAINE,
G. W. MASON,
W. J. PEALE,
W. H. WILSON,
WILLIAM VERNER,
JOHN A. WILSON,
W. H. WALLACE, M. D.,
J. A. WIEDERSHEIM,

} *Vestrymen.*

November 1st, 1890.

TO THE MEMBERS

OF

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, WEST PHILADELPHIA.

Your attention has doubtless been drawn to addresses made by the Rector from the pulpit on three successive Sundays, the 12th, 19th and 26th October, in regard to dissensions in the church, involving an issue between himself and the Vestry, in which he has indulged in sharp reflections upon the members of the Vestry that are unsupported by the facts of the case; and comments upon these addresses have been made in the daily papers containing much misrepresentation calculated to produce erroneous impressions.

Now we, the undersigned, Vestrymen of St. Andrew's Church, deem it due to ourselves, as well as to you whose representatives we are, to submit for your consideration a plain statement that can be verified by the records of the parish.

When the late Rev. Doctor R. B. Claxton assumed the position of Rector of St. Andrew's, in December, 1873, the church, which had a seating capacity of about 360, was not well filled, and the finances were in an unsatisfactory condition. Under his administration the membership increased, until in the year 1879 all available space was occupied, and the necessity for additional accommodations appeared to be imperative.

The receipts from pew rents and ordinary collections, which for the year ending April 1st, 1874, amounted to \$1854, increased until on April 1st, 1882, they reached the sum of \$3837 for the preceding year. During that period the expenses exceeded the receipts by a moderate amount, in consequence of necessary expenditures for repairs to the property, which had been allowed to run down; but from April, 1882, to April, 1884, there was a slight surplus of receipts.

Dr. Claxton died in May, 1882, and was succeeded by Rev. C. W. Duane in October of the same year.

It has been stated by the Rector that for the first few years of his rectorship, while in the old church, the pew-rental was larger than ever before. We find upon examination of the church books that the pew-rents amounted, for the year ending April 1st, 1881, to \$3489, and continued very nearly the

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same to April, 1885, when they amounted to \$3564, the largest amount being \$3793, in the year 1884, there being a very slight change in the church membership during that period, the latter three years being under Mr. Duane's rectorship. The new church was opened for use in April 1885, and the receipts from rental during the ensuing year amounted to \$5196, in consequence of the enlarged accommodations and the attractions of a new church. From 1886 to 1890 the membership and receipts from rental of pews have been gradually diminishing, the total amount of rents for the year ending April 1st, 1890, being \$4203.

Proceedings for providing increased accommodation were commenced in the year 1880, and at a parish meeting held November 10th, 1880, resolutions were adopted approving of the erection of a larger edifice and appointing a committee to receive subscriptions, the sum of \$7200 being subscribed on the spot. On October 4th, 1881, plans for the proposed structure were adopted and a resolution passed fixing the amount necessary to be secured before commencing construction at \$25,000. Through the exertions of the committee, largely aided by the efforts of Doctor Claxton, the larger portion of the required amount was made up by the close of the year 1882 but it was not until October, 1883, that the Vestry felt warranted in entering into contract for the building, which was completed and opened for use in April, 1885. From the above sketch it will be perceived that the project was well advanced before the present Rector took charge in October, 1882. Without any disposition to detract from what merit he is entitled to, we hardly think that he can claim credit for the enterprise. With the exception of his own subscription, we are not aware of his having influenced any contributions to the building fund. The entire cost of the structure was \$48,062, of which the sum of \$25,062 was obtained from subscriptions and donations and the balance of \$23,000 from loans, which latter sum has been reduced to \$17,700. Of the \$5300 paid off, \$3560 have been contributed by members of the congregation and \$1740 obtained from legacies.

You whom we now address are competent to judge how far these contributions, together with \$4000 for the new organ, are to be credited to love and attachment to the church or to other influences.

As the Rector has stated, as an evidence of his popularity, that the subscription of \$4000 for a new organ was completed in two weeks, and the organ erected within four months, we will give the true history of the affair, which is as follows:—

The decision to open a subscription for a new organ was made in April, 1886, and the first contribution was received in May following. Although the necessary amount was not subscribed, the Vestry assumed the responsibility of entering into contract for the organ on July 10th, 1886. The organ was completed and ready for use on October 24th of same year. Payments on account were made to the builder in advance of receipts from subscriptions, and when the final payment was made in December, 1886, the receipts were \$1200 short of the required amount. This sum was advanced by the Accounting Warden, without interest, and was gradually repaid as the balance of subscriptions came in, the last receipt being on January 2d, 1889. The receipts were as follows: from individuals, \$2059; from Young Ladies' Chapter of Church Workers, \$471; children's fair, \$100; Sunday-school, \$1025; infant school, \$75; and from sale of old organ, \$300.

As the Rector has referred to the large sums passing through the hands of the Accounting Warden last year, we think it proper to give you the exact figures, from which you can draw your own conclusions.

They are as follows for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1890:—

Receipts from pew-rents.....	\$4,203 35
" " ordinary collections.....	574 79
" " contribution for choir.....	21 20
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Total ordinary receipts..... \$4,799 34

Expended for Rector's salary and supply	\$2,010 00
" " sexton's salary.....	400 00
" " choir salaries and expenses.....	1,413 50
" " gas	196 80
" " coal	237 75
" " water rent.....	17 00
" " Christmas greens.....	20 00
" " repairs.....	226 25
" " convention assessment	116 80
" " sundries	64 10
" " cleaning buildings, &c.....	48 50
" " interest on debt.....	1,035 00
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Total ordinary expenses

Excess of expenses over receipts..... \$986 36

The extraordinary receipts and expenses were as follows:—

Received from special contributions for payment of debts.....	\$1,066 72
" " special Easter collection and Sunday-school.....	570 69
" " legacies.....	4,485 00
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	\$6,122 41

Expended for deficiencies in current receipts prior to

April, 1889..... \$1,091 03

Expended for repayment of temporary loan

 " " double-glazing large window

223 00

 " " ventilators in parish building.....

27 06

 " " deficiency in collection for diocesan mis-

 sions

7 68

 " " redemption of certificates of loan.....

2,800 00

 " " deficiency in current account March, 1890..

986 36

Balance on hand April 1st, 1890.....

137 28

\$6,122 41

It will thus be seen that a large portion of the legacies left to the parish was absorbed in paying debts occurring from excess of ordinary expenses over ordinary receipts, instead of being appropriated to the reduction of the church debts.

In changing from the old to the new church and reorganizing the choir, there was, of course, an increase in current expenses, but it was expected that

there would be a proportionate increase in receipts from new members. Instead of this being the case, the membership has been steadily diminishing since 1886, when it had reached its maximum.

The charge has been made by the Rector that the Choir Committee, or one of its members, had usurped the authority of the Rector, who was opposed to the introduction of a boy choir. How far this is correct may be seen from the following notes taken from the minutes of the Vestry:—

At the regular stated meeting of the Vestry, January 5th, 1886, the Rector in the chair, the Choir Committee made a lengthy report upon the condition of the existing choir, and recommended the substitution of a boy choir, giving details of the proposed arrangements and an estimate of expenses. After a full discussion, a resolution was unanimously adopted, authorizing the committee to carry out the plan suggested. If the Rector felt any objection to the change, he did not express it. At subsequent meetings of the Vestry, held February 16th, April 6th and October 6th, 1886, and on January 4th, April 5th and April 12th, 1887, various matters of detail pertaining to the choir were discussed and provided for. The Rector was present at all of these meetings, and made no objection to the proceedings, nor did he on any occasion propose any other plan of organization. The members of the Vestry never disputed his right to regulate the music of the church. He has recently expressed himself as not in favor of the boy choir, but this has only been done informally, after difficulties began to present themselves.

The expenses of the old quartette choir averaged \$870 per year, while those of the present choir for the last year amounted to \$1413. It is questionable whether any description of choir in a church of the size of our present building could be maintained for a less sum.

Previous to the year 1886 the first-named person on the Choir Committee, as on other committees, acted as chairman, not supposing that he was interfering in any way with the authority of the Rector, who, although *ex officio* chairman, had never been in the habit of assuming the duties of the position. About February, 1886, the Rector suddenly took offense at some action of the acting chairman, and very abruptly notified him that he (the Rector) was the chairman. The former immediately, without any hesitation, handed over all the papers in his possession to the Rector, and retired from the leadership of the committee, subsequently declining a reappointment as a member of the committee.

The Rector expresses with some emphasis the opinion that the rates for rental of pews are too high, and that a reduction would increase the membership and revenue. In April, 1885, when the new church was opened for use, the subject of pew-rents was carefully considered by the Finance Committee of the Vestry, who reported a schedule after having made comparison with the rates of several of the prominent churches of various denominations in West Philadelphia. Their report was unanimously adopted.

At a Vestry meeting in January, 1887, the subject of pew-rents was taken up and referred to the Finance Committee and the Wardens, who submitted a report at a Vestry meeting on April 5th following, the preamble of which is as follows:—

"The committee to whom was referred the subject of revision of rates for rental of pews respectfully report that, after a careful examination, they have

reached the conclusion that while in their opinion the present schedule is well adjusted as to the relative advantages of the several pews, and the rates are not higher than those of other churches in the vicinity, yet, in order to place sittings within the reach of many whose means are limited, it is expedient to make reduction in the rentals of a sufficient number of pews to meet that object. The committee therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolution:—

"Resolved, That the rates for rentals of pews indicated by figures in red on the annexed diagram be approved and adopted, to take effect from and after April 1st, 1887."

The report was adopted, but the reduction appears to have had little effect towards increasing the membership. It may be observed here that, with the approval of the Vestry, the Accounting Warden has, in several cases where he was satisfied as to the inability of the parties, either reduced the rental or remitted it entirely. No one has been allowed to leave the church on account of pew-rent. It is believed by the members of the Vestry that there is at present a sufficient number of pews at very low rent to supply all demands, in addition to which there are forty-eight free sittings.

Diagrams of the pews with the quarterly rental were prepared and distributed among the congregation at the time of renting the pews, on the opening of the new church, and the same was done after the revision above mentioned was made.

No comparison can be fairly made between the rentals of the pews in the old church and those in the new, the capacity of the pews and their location being different. The Rector states that the sixteenth pew from the front, which had a rental of ten dollars per quarter in the old church, was raised to twenty-four dollars in the new. This pew in the old church seated four persons, and was the fourth pew from the door; in the new church the sixteenth pew from the chancel seats five persons, and is the fifteenth from the door, and in the middle of the church. The highest rental for a single pew in the old church was ninety-two dollars per year; in the new church it is \$100. Five of the Vestrymen occupy pews of that class, and the pews occupied by the remaining members are very slightly lower in rent. Thirteen of what the Rector terms choice pews have been for a long time vacant, while many others quite as eligible (the acoustic properties of the church being unsurpassed) are also unoccupied, running down to as low a rate as twenty-four dollars per year (while there are still others at eight dollars per year).

The members of the Vestry are not aware of any protest ever having been made by the Rector on the subject of pew-rents. In changing from the old to the new church, the endeavor was made to maintain proportionate rates; no increase was subsequently made, but a number of pews had their rates reduced as above stated.

After the sum of \$15,000 had been secured by a mortgage upon the church property, there still remained a further sum of \$8000 to be provided for. In order to have the opportunity of paying this off gradually, it was concluded to issue certificates of loan for \$100 each, which the members of the congregation were solicited to take. Subscriptions were received in sums varying from \$500 to \$100, and after every opportunity had been afforded and persuasion exhausted

to induce subscriptions, the balance remaining was taken by some of the members of the Vestry, who did so only as a matter of necessity, to enable claims against the church to be satisfied.

In redeeming these certificates, care has been taken to make fair distribution among the holders.

The allusions by the Rector to subscriptions to the fund do not deserve notice, but to correct a palpable error, it may be stated that the entire amount paid to the architects for furnishing plans and specifications and superintending the construction was \$2245, nearly all of which was absorbed in office expenses; leaving but a small margin of profit. It is unnecessary to reply to the insinuation as to defects in the structure—the building speaks for itself.

It having been stated by the Rector that there has been no falling off in membership, we find that according to the list of removals and accessions accompanying the annual report for the year ending March 31st, 1889, which was given to the Rector and is still in his possession, eighteen pews and parts of pews had been vacated during the year, and that several persons had reduced the number of their sittings. During the same period some new parties took seats, of whom four have remained. From April, 1889, to this date a number of pews have been vacated and a few taken, resulting in a loss of thirteen pews. No new members have been added since April, 1890. All changes in membership were regularly reported to the Rector.

The Rector having in his recent addresses made charges of bad management, the following explanation will show how far he is correct in the views expressed:—

The Accounting Warden at each quarterly meeting of the Vestry presents a detailed statement of receipts and expenses for the preceding three months, which is subsequently audited by the Finance Committee, who report at the next meeting. He also presents at the April meeting of each year a full statement for the fiscal year preceding, embracing every matter of information connected with his department. The principal items of expenditure are fixed by the Vestry, whose authority is also required for any new work or improvements. The only items left to the discretion of the Accounting Warden are those for ordinary repairs and incidentals. The church property comprises a large lot upon which are erected three distinct buildings. It is the duty of the Warden, and it has been his constant endeavor, to keep the property in good condition; in so doing and in attending to the supply of fuel, light and other incidentals, he has, in our opinion, acted with care and a due regard to economy. It is not reasonable to suppose that he would indulge in extravagance, when he has been compelled in most of his quarterly settlements during a period of over fifteen years to make advances in order to maintain the financial credit of the parish; the advances thus made having accumulated by April, 1889, to the sum of \$1089, which was then liquidated by the proceeds of a special collection at Easter, supplemented by an appropriation of part of a legacy. A further portion of the legacy was required to cover the deficiency of the succeeding year. As legacies are not frequent, the prospect for the ensuing year is not encouraging.

Reference was made by the Rector, in his address, to a letter written to him by the Accounting Warden, August 5th, 1889. For some time previous the Warden had been importuned by several members of the Vestry, as well as

by others of the congregation, to join in some vigorous and decided action for improving the condition of the parish. While recognizing the force of the arguments presented, he felt averse to taking any action that would attract public notice. After some reflection, he concluded to address a written communication to the Rector, giving what he truly believed to be a correct exposition of the affairs and condition of the parish and the state of feeling that existed among a large portion of the congregation. He was in hopes that the Rector would adopt the conclusion that the best course for him to pursue, with a due regard for his own interests as well as those of the parish, would be to resign his charge without waiting for a formal request from the majority of the Vestry. He consulted no one in regard to his action, stating in his letter that the communication was made confidentially, without the knowledge of any one. The writer assumed that it would be best for the Rector to have the matter submitted for his consideration when he was remote from personal contact with any of the interested parties; hence his choice of the time of vacation; possibly it was a mistaken view. Receipt of this letter was promptly acknowledged, and after the Rector's return, about the middle of September, an interview was had, which, however, produced no result. The Warden is not responsible for the newspaper statement that no notice was taken of the letter. Noticing the remark of the Rector that the "predicted exodus" did not take place, the answer is, that several parties who had expressed their intention to vacate their pews were persuaded by the Warden to defer doing so until all hopes of relief should fail. Some of them have since carried out their intentions. In regard to the alleged breach of honor in exhibiting the letter, which was incorrectly stated by the Rector to have been "put in circulation." About two months subsequent to the date of the letter, the Vestrymen above mentioned becoming impatient at the apparent delay in making any effort, the Warden, in order to show that he had not been inattentive to their complaints, and to induce them to exercise a longer forbearance, in hopes of some movement by the Rector, was compelled to state what he had done, and to communicate to them the contents of the letter. As the writer and not the receiver, and not betraying any confidence reposed in him, he felt fully warranted under the circumstances in acting as he did. The Rector, however, forgets that he had himself previously shown the letter to his Warden before it was so carefully put away. Had the Rector tendered his resignation when the condition of affairs was made known to him, the fact of a letter having been sent to him would never have been mentioned.

On or about July 15th of this year, the Rector voluntarily stated to three or more members of the Vestry that he had signed an agreement with the Bishop of New Jersey to take charge of a college at Burlington, and would resign the rectorship of St. Andrew's Church in October. This information, which was announced in the daily as well as the Church papers, but not through our agency, afforded much relief to many of the members of St. Andrew's Church, as disposing of a disagreeable matter without disturbance. Upon being requested to make a written communication which would be laid before the Vestry at a special meeting, the Rector replied that it was not necessary, as he would be present at the regular meeting early in October. The Vestry confidently expected to receive the resignation at that time, and their surprise may be imagined when the Rector announced, in a defiant manner, that he would "stand upon his legal rights," and remain until it suited him to go.